

Wilton Water Works
May 22, 2014 @ 6:30PM Town Hall Courtroom
Minutes DRAFT – AMENDED & APPROVED 6/17/2014

Wilton Water Works held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday May 22, 2014 in the Selectmen's Office (due to construction in the Courtroom). Present were Commissioner/Chairman Tom Schultz and Bill Condra; Water Superintendent Mike Bergeron; Clerk Joanna K Eckstrom; Arthur and Virginia Iannacci and Chuck Crawford (both on agenda); Charlie McGettigan and Jim McGettigan, members of public. Commissioner Steve Elliott was delayed and arrived at 7:05.

Call to order – Mr. Schultz called the meeting to order at 6:35.

Public input / comment – there was no public input or comment.

Minutes Apr 24th Moved Mr. Condra, second Mr. Schultz, approved as written; unanimous.

Accounts Receivable – Jane Farrell report Deferred until later in meeting.

Accounts Payable – Pam Atwood report – Expense report through April 30th was reviewed; note - expenses allocated to Tools & Machinery where there is no budget; should be moved to Equipment line. With reference to **old bills rendered to Wetherbee and Roedel**, it was unclear at last meeting who would contact them on these so Clerk will invite both to the June meeting. Mr. Condra offered to check the letter / invitation that Ms. Eckstrom sends.

Arthur and Virginia Iannacci, Abbot Hill Rd discussion, decision on bids for water hookup. Mike Bergeron made requests for bids to five contractors and the Highway Department for bids – Leighton White and Ken Rocca declined. Bids received from Mathewson -\$26,250; Steven A Desmarais Construction Co. - \$24,500; Landsite Corp. - \$23,983.30; and Wilton Highway Department - \$7,940. Mr. Schultz was concerned with significant differences between outside contractor bids vs. Town's. Mike Bergeron assured that all parties bid on same specs. Mistert Schultz and Condra were reluctant to award a contract without input from Mr. Elliott so discussion was suspended until he arrived. In the meantime, Mike Bergeron said he'd visited **Leo Lafontaine** property 3 Maple Street, Milford to check out feasibility and cost of water hook-up there. It is approximately 550 ft from existing water line (on Maple St) to Lafontaine's property; estimated cost is \$20K-\$30K. This is far more costly than Mr. Lafontaine expected; he and his neighbor who share a well are going to use an aeration system to reduce the amount of radon in their water.

Mr. Elliott arrived at 7:05; discussion on Iannacci project resumed. Steve reviewed bids from the outside contractors and wasn't too surprised at how great the difference was between their bids and the highway department's. Mr. Condra asked Mr. Elliott's confidence level that Highway Department can do the job for \$7,940. He said 100% and that he will recuse himself from voting. Mr. Condra said that Highway Department just built two bridges for town at far less money than

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would have been spent with outside contractor. Bridges meet required specs and are fully functional.

He feels WWW would be remiss if it didn't not have the highway department do the Iannacci job.

On a motion by Mr. Condra, seconded by Mr. Schultz, the contract was awarded to the town highway department for \$7,940 – Misters Condra and Schultz voted Yes, Mr. Elliott abstained.

The 'project' is defined as work in the street, on water works lines and DOES NOT INCLUDE any pipes or labor from the street to the house – Iannaccis are solely responsible for those costs.

The previous commission had agreed / voted to pay up for materials for the project, earlier \$3,700 but currently \$4,500.

On a motion by Mr. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Elliott, commissioners unanimously agreed to split the (labor) cost 60:40 with the Iannaccis – Water Works will pay \$4,764 (labor) and materials; Iannaccis will pay \$3,176. Iannaccis are solely responsible for costs of labor and materials on their property.

Mr. Schultz apologized for the delay and inconvenience the Iannaccis have had – resolution took more than a year. Mr. Elliott expects that highway department can schedule the work in July and that it will take about three days. Iannaccis expressed their thanks to all.

Dr. Charles Crawford – new owner Wilton Falls building – Dr. Crawford has been before the commission many times to request that WWW reverse its policy requiring backflow devices on dry fire protection (sprinkler) systems. He cited many reasons that such a device is not needed and questioned the logic of requiring them. Dr Crawford said that NH DES has no authority to mandate the devices; the national plumbing code doesn't require them on a dry system. Dr. Crawford and his colleague, Richard Sharkey, devoted a lot of time, energy and money researching the issue and defending their desire to have the device removed. Dr. Crawford feels that an unscrupulous backflow installer / inspector swayed previous commission (2005 or 2006) into requiring device on a dry system. He believes both inspector and commission had a personal financial gain in this and that Wilton Falls building is the only place in town where this device is required (on a dry system).

No current commissioners were seated when device was installed but each new commissioner has had to deal with the controversy. Last year at about this time, Commissioners Frank Edelblut, Tom Schultz, and Bill Condra supported requirement, citing the RSA and policy that WWW had filed with DES. When asked by the Wilton Main Street Association to reverse the policy, they did not do so. Mr. Condra said that for a time, he agreed that the device may have been needed but he had changed his mind, noting that the ~~2012~~ 2009 Commercial Plumbing Code has an exception for dry systems. He added that recent legislation has changed the wording of the RSA but still leaves option (to

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require the device on dry system) up to the individual town and that Wilton Works opted to impose the more stringent rule.

Mr. Elliott asked what activates the dry system? Dr Crawford – pressurized air. There’s a flat, hinged valve – when pressure drops, water is let in.

Mr Schultz said that everyone’s recommendation has been to require the device. WWW chief concern is safety and quality of water supply. Schultz said that in the past, WMSA said that the organization’s financial hardship were the result of the WWW imposing the device on them, even leading to bank foreclosure on the property. Dr Crawford said it did but as the new owner of the building, financial issues aren’t the problem – having the device on a dry system is. – It just doesn’t make sense, technically.

Mr Bergeron asked is there is an external hookup on the fire protection (dry) system? Dr. Crawford didn’t know.

Dr Crawford has received a postcard from New England Backflow to do an inspection on May 28th. He was adamant that he doesn’t want that company on any of his properties.

~~All agreed that the company that inspects should not be one to do repairs and re-test.~~ Water commissioners recommend that repairs be done by someone other than the inspector.

Ms Eckstrom asked who would be responsible if the device was removed and backflow contaminates the water supply? There was no clear answer but ultimately, it was thought it would fall to Wilton Water Works.

Mr Schultz said this has been going on too long; didn’t want to keep repeating pros and cons again.

Ms. Eckstrom said that her review of the minutes shows that the Water Commission shared the cost of installing the backflow device with 50/50 WMSA. WMSA didn’t pay for it all themselves.

Mr. Elliott moved to repeal the requirement for backflow preventers on dry-pipe systems; Mr. Condra seconded.

Mr Bergeron thought it unwise to do this without knowing what’s there.

Ms. Eckstrom asked if the motion (to repeal) was to apply to all systems or to this one only.

Mr Condra amended the motion, seconded by Mr Schultz to say that the motion to repeal does not apply to systems that have the capacity for the fire department to back charge the public water system. Amendment carried unanimously.

The new motion by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Condra – to repeal the requirement for backflow preventers on dry-pipe systems except systems with the capacity for the fire department to back charge the public water system was approved 2:1 – Misters Condra and Elliott Yes, Schultz No.

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Mr Bergeron will coordinate with Fire Chief Ray Dick to determine whether or not the Wilton Falls Building meets above conditions and can remove the backflow device from its dry system.

Grant Follow up –

Update GIS Mapping – Issuance of the GIS Mapping is still pending; paperwork has been submitted; waiting for governor to sign.

Generator – Mike Bergeron received three bids from Powers Generators \$26,833 plus tax, Yestramski Electrical Services Inc. \$27,503 plus tax and Buxton Service Inc. \$33,800 plus freight \$500. All are for the same Kohler 100REZGD, 100kW generator (which happen to come from the same distributor) and ancillary features; quotes do NOT include any site prep – these costs have already been paid for by the WWW. On a motion by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Condra, the Powers proposal for \$26,833 plus \$755 for sound attenuation enclosure (Item 5) was unanimously approved.

Dam Engineering update (continued from April). Dam Owner EAP updates per e-mail 5/16. Bill for the dam was approved. Mike Bergeron is in regular contact with Nancy McGrath about the EAP (Emergency Action Plan) and will follow up as needed. Many items addressed in the EAP will come from H.T.E. company engineering study. Ms. McGrath is aware that the engineering is underway.

Backflow testing – three bids were received for the 2014 backflow testing – from New England Backflow at \$45 per device; Village Fire at \$65 per device and Life Safety at \$75 per device. All bids are for a non-exclusive contract (customers may use their own vendor but test report must be provided to Wilton Water Works who will bill a ‘processing fee’.) On a motion by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Condra, the New England Backflow proposal was unanimously accepted. Mr. Condra noted that he has seen incidents of devices being failed and the customers being charged for repairs and reinspection by the same company. He’d like to see a pass / fail report. Mr. Elliott agreed this is important and added that the original inspector should not be doing the repairs and then re-testing his own work. Testing and repairs should be done by separate licensees.

New England Backflow has already begun notifying customers about their inspections. Clerk will send a letter from WWW letting customers know that New England Backflow is the contractor WWW has hired but customers have a right to use a certified backflow tester of their own choice; they’d pay a fee to WWW to process the outside report. Ms. Eckstrom has coordinated with town hall staff and New England Backflow regarding owner addresses.

Mr. Schultz will follow up with NE B to confirm the non-exclusive arrangement and ascertain where the company is in this round of inspections.

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Superintendent Report

Everett well repair – there was a ‘blip;’ Barry Miller rejected the pump shaft as he was not satisfied with appearance of a flange that didn’t have properly machined surface. A new shaft is being cut. Project set back 2-3 weeks; expected to complete in early June. Mike had (and will have) part-time while the pump is being restored. LaViolette Controls programmed new schematic for reading chemical balances. Program will be ready to go when the Everett well is restarted.

Mike has new water meters; three have been installed (at problem locations found at last reading).

Mike shared water Consumer Confidence Report that is due to customers on July 1st. The document needs to be proofed and put on a single page if possible. Clerk will assist in this as needed.

Accounts Receivable – Jane Farrell provided a statement of water bill receipts to date noting that the latest bills are due on June 5th. Bill adds and abatements were approved.

Shared Costs – letter to Water Works – commission discussed e-mail from Bill Drescher; his opinion is that WWW may be semi-autonomous however, commissioners disagree based upon the charter (having two towns). Mr. Elliott doesn’t believe that WWW owns the dams as Selectmen’s letter suggests. Mistert Schultz and Condra agree. Mr Schultz cited Lake Massabesic, Manchester and surrounding towns’ water supply, as an example – if WWW owned the dams, it would face a property tax burden that would bankrupt users.

With regard accepting ownership and the Selectmen’s proposed agreement, Mr. Condra moved, Mr. Elliott seconded that Wilton Water Works ‘respectfully declines ownership but that WWW will continue to participate in maintenance and upkeep of the dams’; unanimous approval .

Other Business – Re: Joan Lemire’s properties, Mr. Schultz moved, Mr. Condra seconded to abate base charge for one unit for one billing cycle (to correct the overcharge); unanimously approved.

TDS / Verizon contacted WWW about easement on Route 31S on WWW property to place a 10x10 enclosure with a 5 x 4 x 2 equipment box inside. Consensus of that TDS / Verizon should do its due diligence and provide more info about this proposal.

Commission has received announcement about DES grants and loans ... in the past, Wilton has not qualified due to median income. Further discussion tabled.

Next meeting – June 26 (Date is tentative)

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna K Eckstrom, Clerk